

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6793

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FOR AF/C - THOMPSON BUCHANAN

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDIP SOPN US CF

SUBJECT: RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH CONGO

(BRAZZAVILLE)

1. I HAVE BEEN MYSTIFIED BY SEVERAL REFERENCES IN PRESS RECENTLY TO NATIONALIZATION OF MOBIL AND TEXACO INTERESTS BY CONGO (BRAZZAVILLE) GOVERNMENT AS FORMING ONE OF GROUNDS FOR SUSPENSION OF OUR RELATIONS WITH THAT GOVERNMENT IN AUGUST 1965. LATEST IS REUTERS ITEM TODAY REPORTING STATE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESUMPTION FULL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, WHICH INCLUDED FOLLOWING PASSAGE: "THE UNITED STATES CLOSED ITS BRAZZAVILLE EMBASSY IN 1965 ALLEGING MISTREATMENT OF ITS OFFICIALS AND DISPUTING THE TERMS UNDER WHICH TWO U.S. OIL COMPANIES, MOBIL AND TEXACO, WERE NATIONALIZED. RELATIONS, HOWEVER, WERE NEVER FORMALLY BROKEN."

2. I WAS DESK OFFICER FOR CONGO (BRAZZAVILLE) AT THE TIME AND DRAFTED NOTE (WITH HELP FROM LEGAL ADVISER'S OFFICE) BY WHICH WE INFORMED BRAZZAVILLE GOVERNMENT THAT WE WERE CLOSING OUR EMBASSY AND REASONS THEREFOR. (DECISION TO CLOSE EMBASSY, BY THE WAY, WAS TAKEN BY UNDER SECRETARY GEORGE BALL.) OUR ACTION FOLLOWED ARBITRARY ARREST AND DETENTION OF AN AID OFFICIAL WHO HAD ARRIVED AT BRAZZAVILLE, WITH A JUST-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EXPIRING VISA, INRESPONSE TO GOCB REQUEST THAT WE SEND IN AN EXPERT TO DISCUSS AID POSSIBILITIES WITH THEM. THIS WAS THIRD INCIDENT OF THE KIND IN A PERIOD OF A FEW WEEKS. OUR NOTE POINTED TO TREATMENT OF OUR DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL AS REASON FOR OUR DECISION AND STATED WE WOULD CONSIDER REOPENING IF AND WHEN GOCB WAS PREPARED TO ASSURE OUR "RIGHT TO LEGATION." MY RECOLLECTION MAY BE FAULTY, BUT I BELIEVE

THERE WAS NO REFERENCE TO NATIONALIZATION OF ANY AMERICAN FIRMS, AND I DO NOT RECALL THAT THOSE PROBLEMS WERE AN ISSUE AT THAT TIME.

3. I TROUBLE YOU WITH THIS NOT ONLY IN THE INTEREST OF HISTORICAL ACCURACY, BUT ALSO BECAUSE I BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT THAT OTHER GOVERNMENTS KNOW THE TRUE BASIS ON WHICH WE TAKE SUCH DECISIONS AS TO CLOSE AN EMBASSY. OTHERWISE PEOPLE MIGHT GET THE IDEA THAT WE CLOSE MISSIONS BECAUSE WE ARE UNHAPPY OVER THE TERMS OF A NATIONALIZATION, WHICH SO FAR AS I KNOW HAS NOT HAPPENED. IF PRESS REPORTING SUCH AS THE REUTERS ITEM QUOTED ABOVE, AND OTHERS WHICH PRECEDED IT, ARE ALLOWED TO GAIN CURRENCY WITHOUT CORRECTION, THEIR VERSION TENDS TO BECOME ENSHRINED AS "HISTORY," WHICH TO THE BEST OF MY RECOLLECTION IT IS NOT.
KEELEY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, NATIONALIZATION, PETROLEUM INDUSTRY, ALLEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 16-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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